

I'M DETERMINED TO MAKE IT

Introductory remarks:

Welcome to our very first **Morning Manna service. I am so glad you have chosen to make this ministry a part of your worship experience.**

The purpose of this service is to provide a refreshing mid-week/mid-day spiritual uplift. I certainly hope the Lord helps us accomplish that goal.

Prayer

Opening chorus: How Great Thou Art

**Then sings my soul, My Savior God, to Thee
How great Thou art, - How great Thou art.
Then sings my soul, My Savior God, to Thee
How great Thou art, - How great Thou art!**

WHEN WE ALL GET TO HEAVEN

1. Sing the wondrous love of Jesus;
Sing His mercy and His grace.
In the mansions bright and blessed
He'll prepare for us a place.

CHORUS

When we all get to Heaven,
What a day of rejoicing that will be!
When we all see Jesus,
We'll sing and shout the victory!

2. While we walk the pilgrim pathway,
Clouds will overspread the sky;
But when traveling days are over,
Not a shadow, not a sigh.

3. Let us then be true and faithful,
Trusting, serving every day;
Just one glimpse of Him in glory
Will the toils of life repay.

**4. Onward to the prize before us!
Soon His beauty we'll behold;
Soon the pearly gates will open;
We shall tread the streets of gold.**

O I WANT TO SEE HIM

**As I journey thro' the land, singing as I go,
Pointing souls to Calvary—to the crimson flow,
Many arrows pierce my soul,
From without, within;
But my Lord leads me on, thro' Him I must win.**

(CHORUS)

**O I want to see Him, look upon His face,
There to sing forever of His saving grace;
On the streets of glory let me lift my voice,
Cares all past, home at last, ever to rejoice.**

I'M DETERMINED TO MAKE IT!

**When in valleys low I look,
Tow'rd the mountain height,
And behold my Savior there,
Leading in the fight,
With a tender hand outstretched, Tow'rd the valley low,
Guiding me, I can see, as I onward go.**

**Let's pause for a moment and thank the Lord for that
wonderful hope of heaven that we have in our heart.**

Prayer of thankfulness.

I'M DETERMINED TO MAKE IT!

Introduction:

**One of the valuable lessons I've learned in my Christian
life is that a Christian has to remain focused on the goal
of making heaven their final destination.**

**You can be assured that the enemy of your soul will try
everything he has to deter you and to discourage you.**

The world is his “oyster” and he will use every temptation, every allurements, and every lust fulfilling desire to try to accomplish that goal.

In addition, he has the assistance of the weakness of the flesh to dampen any enthusiasm for righteousness, to crush any attempt at happiness, and to discourage every effort to do what is pleasing to the Lord.

He truly wants you to throw up your hands and surrender and cry out, “Forget it, I can’t do this anymore!”

My text is a powerful weapon in this fight. It reveals a Christian’s steadfast life-affirming motivation and it exposes their valiant heart of fearless courage.

It is thought by Bible scholars that the Apostle Paul was between 60 and 70 years old when he died. He certainly had plenty of opportunities to leave the faith and to give up the fight. But, he didn’t!

In fact, he wrote a powerful expose of his mindset in his letter to the Ephesian Christians when he said in Chapter 6, verse 12, - **“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against**

powers, against the rulers of [a]the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

Paul understood an important fact: Whereas, people may work against us and do all manner of evil to us - the true instigator and protagonist of evil actions is Satan.

My text for this message is in the letter Paul wrote to the Philippian Christians. I will read it from two translations to better help our understanding.

My heart is full of hope that you will allow this Word to speak to you and strengthen your resolve to make it to the end of the race.

Philippians 3:13-14 KJV

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:13-14 New Life Version

13 No, Christian brothers, I do not have that life yet. But I do one thing. I forget everything that is behind me and look forward to that which is ahead of me.

14 My eyes are on the crown. I want to win the race and get the crown of God's call from heaven through Christ Jesus.

I'm going to take the liberty to dissect these two verses and deal with each majestic thought separately.

(Philippians 3:13-14 New Life Version

13 ~~No, Christian brothers,~~ I do not have that life yet. ~~But I do one thing. I forget everything that is behind me and look forward to that which is ahead of me.~~

14 ~~My eyes are on the crown. I want to win the race and get the crown of God's call from heaven through Christ Jesus.)~~

1. We don't have that life yet.

All of us are still here - fighting the enemy and dealing with the hardships of this life. Every day, when we rise

and start our day - the enemy is present to harass us and try to turn us aside. In fact, many times he will torment us during the night as we lie awake and stress over a myriad of problems.

He will not relent.

He has no mercy.

He will discourage.

He will distort.

He will deceive.

He will lie!

But, we must not be overwhelmed by his attacks because we have the Lord's promise that He is always with us and will never forsake us.

I love what Isaiah wrote in -

Isaiah 59:19 - ... When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.

Proverbs 3:24

When you lie down, you will not be afraid, when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.

Psalm 127:2

...for he gives to his beloved sleep.

Psalm 4:8

I will lie down and sleep in peace, for You alone, O Lord make me dwell in safety.

Philippians 4:6-7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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2. We must be singularly focused.

With so many things vying for our attention, it is a formidable challenge to stay focused on the **“one thing.”**

I have found that the enemy attacks me more often over my family than anything else. Have you experienced similar mental and emotional attacks?

The Apostle Paul understood the power of focus. In photography, focus eliminates the distortion and anything else that diminishes clarity. When the focus is distorted, everything in the photo will be blurry and unpleasant to view.

Satan wants to distort our spiritual focus so our life, and our faith, will be indistinct.

****He knows that a focused Christian is unstoppable!**

****He knows that a focused Christian is powerful in faith and works!**

****He knows that a focused Christian cannot be easily turned aside and will not quit!**

We must be diligent, determined, and steadfast in order to stay focused.

When I used to do a lot of photography, I learned the importance of patience, steadiness, and alertness.

Paul's emphasis on **"one thing"** does not rule out the necessity of our attention to many things. In fact, the **"one thing"** provides the foundation and balance to all the other things we do. It is the spiritual counter-weight that keeps us focused on the goal.

His **"one thing"** is the enclosing, all-embracing wall of protection for our mind and spirit.

We need to be faithful and consistent in our **"one thing"** Christian lifestyle. Focused - undeterred - one main purpose!

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3. We must not allow the past to rule us.

Are you imprisoned by your past? Are you routinely harassed by the enemy about events and troubles of your past?

Have you surrendered your past to the Lord?

Paul had a terrible past. He arrested Christians and delivered them to be tortured or put to death. He hated Christians. He was a religionist - a Pharisee of Pharisees.

Listen to him describe his past.

Acts 22:1-5

1 Paul said, "Brothers and fathers, listen to what I have to say to you." 2 When they heard him speak to them in their own language, they stopped making noise. Then he said,

3 "I am a Jew. I was born in the city of Tarsus in the country of Cilicia. When I was a young man, I lived here in Jerusalem. I went to Gamaliel's school and learned all about the Law of our early fathers. I worked hard for God as you all do today.

4 "I worked hard and killed men and women who believed as I believe today. I put them in chains and sent them to prison. 5 The head religious leader and the

leaders of the people can tell you this is true. I got letters from them to take to our Jewish brothers in the city of Damascus. I was going there to put the Christians in chains and bring them to Jerusalem where they would be beaten.

It's unlikely that you have ever done the things which Paul describes. I know I haven't!

But, our past may be littered with bad decisions, bad choices, hurt feelings, anger and resentments. Before we came to Jesus, we were a mess. Our flesh totally controlled us and we willfully did all the negative things our flesh demanded.

That's not to say that everything in our past was bad. There were also many good things. It's interesting that the good things are not what imprisons us and shackles us to our past. It's always the bad things that the enemy uses to remind us of failures and disappointments.

Paul declared that his past would not determine his future. His bad choices, his religious credentials, and his hatred would not be allowed to interfere with who he was in Christ.

We, likewise, must require the past to stay in the past. If anything needs to be remedied, and you are able to attend to that situation, do it and then leave it.

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4. We must faithfully follow the path before us.

Our future is whole and complete in Jesus. Listen to this wonderful song of praise written by King David.

Psalm 5 NLT

1 O Lord, hear me as I pray; pay attention to my groaning.

2 Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for I pray to no one but you.

3 Listen to my voice in the morning, Lord. Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly.

4 O God, you take no pleasure in wickedness; you cannot tolerate the sins of the wicked.

5 Therefore, the proud may not stand in your presence, for you hate all who do evil.

6 You will destroy those who tell lies. The Lord detests murderers and deceivers.

7 Because of your unfailing love, I can enter your house; I will worship at your Temple with deepest awe.

8 Lead me in the right path, O Lord, or my enemies will conquer me. **Make your way plain for me to follow.**

9 My enemies cannot speak a truthful word. Their deepest desire is to destroy others.

Their talk is foul, like the stench from an open grave. Their tongues are filled with flattery.[a]

10 O God, declare them guilty. Let them be caught in their own traps. Drive them away because of their many sins, for they have rebelled against you.

11 But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them sing joyful praises forever. Spread your protection over them, that all who love your name may be filled with joy.

12 For you bless the godly, O Lord; you surround them with your shield of love.

Our forward path is made plain in His Word. It is our roadmap. It will lead us by revealing His will for our life and His Holy Spirit ever goes before us.

Our future is not secure because of who we are or what we have done. Our future is secure because of who He is and what He has done.

When Paul met Jesus on the Damascus road the direction of his life was totally changed. That is the way it always works when a person meets Jesus.

Their direction is changed. Their value system is changed. Their understanding of righteousness is changed. Their heart is changed. Their focus is changed.

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5. We must keep our eyes on the prize to win it.

I ran track when I was a young guy. One of the first lessons of running is that you must have singular focus on the finish line. If you turn to smile at the adoring bystanders, you lose focus. If you turn to see who is gaining on you, you lose focus. If you look down at your feet, you lose focus.

If I wanted to win, I had to look straight ahead and run with all my might.

If we will remember that a crown of righteousness is our prize when we get to God's Kingdom - we will more dutifully run the race.

Here's what I've found to be true in my many years of ministry: The Christian who has a clear understanding of the race will run faithfully and on purpose. The one

who is casual and careless about the race will dawdle and dilly-dally around and make little effort to diligently run toward the finish line.

The King James Version of this text says - 14 **I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.**

In other words - I'm giving it my all!

Do you have your eyes on the prize? Are you pressing toward the mark? Are you diligent in your faith and faithfulness?

That is the challenge before us. The race is ours to win or lose.

The chorus of the song - "Jesus Paid It All" - says:

Jesus paid it all,

All to Him I owe;

Sin had left a crimson stain,

He washed it white as snow.